

U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

OMB NO. 1124-0002; Expires February 28, 2014

Supplemental Statement

**Pursuant to the Foreign Agents Registration Act of
1938, as amended**

For Six Month Period Ending 2/29/2012

(Insert date)

I - REGISTRANT

1. (a) Name of Registrant

(b) Registration No.

Whitaker Group, Inc

5539

(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant

1133 21st St NW, Suite 405, Washington DC 20036

2. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following?

(a) If an individual:

(1) Residence address(es) Yes ☐ No ☐

(2) Citizenship Yes ☐ No ☐

(3) Occupation Yes ☐ No ☐

(b) If an organization:

(1) Name Yes ☐ No ☒

(2) Ownership or control Yes ☐ No ☒

(3) Branch offices Yes ☐ No ☒

(c) Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in Items (a) and (b) above.

IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4, AND 5(a).

3. If you have previously filed Exhibit C, state whether any changes therein have occurred during this 6 month reporting period:

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, have you filed an amendment to the Exhibit C? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please attach the required amendment.

1. The Exhibit C, for which no printed form is provided, consists of a true copy of the charter, articles of incorporation, association, and by laws of a registrant that is an organization. (A waiver of the requirement to file an Exhibit C may be obtained for good cause upon written application to the Assistant Attorney General, National Security Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530).

Formerly CRM-154

FORM NSD-2
Revised 03/11

4. (a) Have any persons ceased acting as partners, officers, directors or similar officials of the registrant during this 6 month reporting period?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position	Date Connection Ended
------	----------	-----------------------

(b) Have any persons become partners, officers, directors or similar officials during this 6 month reporting period?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Residence Address	Citizenship	Position	Date Assumed
Eliot Pence	2009 Wyoming Ave NW Washington DC 20009	Canada	Director	1/1/2012

5. (a) Has any person named in Item 4(b) rendered services directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each such person and describe the service rendered.

Eliot Pence has assisted in the corporate outreach and business development on behalf of Ecobank Transnational.

(b) During this six month reporting period, has the registrant hired as employees or in any other capacity, any persons who rendered or will render services to the registrant directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal(s) in other than a clerical or secretarial, or in a related or similar capacity? Yes ☐ No ☒

Name	Residence Address	Citizenship	Position	Date Assumed
------	-------------------	-------------	----------	--------------

(c) Have any employees or individuals, who have filed a short form registration statement, terminated their employment or connection with the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position or Connection	Date Terminated
------	------------------------	-----------------

(d) Have any employees or individuals, who have filed a short form registration statement, terminated their connection with any foreign principal during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position or Connection	Foreign Principal	Date Terminated
------	------------------------	-------------------	-----------------

6. Have short form registration statements been filed by all of the persons named in Items 5(a) and 5(b) of the supplemental statement?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, list names of persons who have not filed the required statement.

II - FOREIGN PRINCIPAL

7. Has your connection with any foreign principal ended during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Foreign Principal

Date of Termination

8. Have you acquired any new foreign principal(s)² during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name and Address of Foreign Principal(s)

Date Acquired

9. In addition to those named in Items 7 and 8, if any, list foreign principal(s)² whom you continued to represent during the 6 month reporting period:

Ecobank Transnational Incorporated

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho

10. (a) Have you filed exhibits for the newly acquired foreign principal(s), if any, listed in Item 8?

Exhibit A³ Yes ☐ No ☐

Exhibit B⁴ Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please attach the required exhibit.

- (b) Have there been any changes in the Exhibits A and B previously filed for any foreign principal whom you represented during this six month period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, have you filed an amendment to these exhibits? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please attach the required amendment.

² The term "foreign principal" includes, in addition to those defined in section 1(b) of the Act, an individual organization any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in major part by a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign organization or foreign individual. (See Rule 100(a)(9)). A registrant who represents more than one foreign principal is required to list in the statements he files under the Act only those principals for whom he is not entitled to claim exemption under Section 3 of the Act. (See Rule 208.)

³ The Exhibit A, which is filed on Form NSD-3 (Formerly CRM-157) sets forth the information required to be disclosed concerning each foreign principal.

⁴ The Exhibit B, which is filed on Form NSD-4 (Formerly CRM-155) sets forth the information concerning the agreement or understanding between the registrant and the foreign principal.

III - ACTIVITIES

11. During this 6 month reporting period, have you engaged in any activities for or rendered any services to any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each foreign principal and describe in full detail your activities and services:

Government of Lesotho -- Monitor legislative developments on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and educate key Congressional and Administration stakeholders through discussions and events; enhance apparel sector demand from US retailers; develop strategies for Lesotho to engage with USG development initiatives in the areas of capacity building, food security and climate change; build partnerships in the areas of higher education, grazing & range management, healthcare and social well-being.

Ecobank -- Engage US corporate entities and international development agencies to build partnerships with Ecobank; provide strategic outreach in key Africa business forums; monitor and advise Ecobank on trends concerning US-Africa business and development policies.

12. During this 6 month reporting period, have you on behalf of any foreign principal engaged in political activity⁵ as defined below? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail all such political activity, indicating, among other things, the relations, interests and policies sought to be influenced and the means employed to achieve this purpose. If the registrant arranged, sponsored or delivered speeches, lectures or radio and TV broadcasts, give details as to dates, places of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

See Annex I

13. In addition to the above described activities, if any, have you engaged in activity on your own behalf which benefits your foreign principal(s)? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, describe fully.

Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) awareness-raising and the publication of media pieces on behalf of the AGOA Action Coalition, which benefits many nations in Africa.

⁵ The term "political activity" means any activity that the person engaging in believes will, or that the person intends to, in any way influence any agency or official of the Government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to formulating, adopting or changing the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or with reference to political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party.

IV - FINANCIAL INFORMATION

14. (a) RECEIPTS-MONIES

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal, any contributions, income or money either as compensation or otherwise? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, explain why.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies.⁶

Date	From Whom	Purpose	Amount
10/4/11	Ecobank	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$12,500.00
11/2/11	Ecobank	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$12,500.00
12/30/11	Ecobank	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$12,500.00
2/6/12	Ecobank	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$12,500.00
9/28/11	Kingdom of Lesotho	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$100,000.00
1/20/12	Kingdom of Lesotho	Fulfillment of contractual obligations	\$100,000.00
			\$250,000.00
			Total

(b) RECEIPTS - FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received, as part of a fundraising campaign, any money on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, have you filed an Exhibit D to your registration? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, indicate the date the Exhibit D was filed: Date _____

(c) RECEIPTS-THINGS OF VALUE

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received any thing of value⁹ other than money from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Foreign Principal	Date Received	Thing of Value	Purpose
-------------------	---------------	----------------	---------

^{6, 7} A registrant is required to file an Exhibit D if he collects or receives contributions, loans, moneys, or other things of value for a foreign principal, as part of a fundraising campaign. (See Rule 201(e)).

⁸ An Exhibit D, for which no printed form is provided, sets forth an account of money collected or received as a result of a fundraising campaign and transmitted for a foreign principal.

⁹ Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks," and the like.

15. (a) DISBURSEMENTS-MONIES

During this 6 month reporting period, have you

(1) disbursed or expended monies in connection with activity on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement? Yes ☐ No ☒(2) transmitted monies to any such foreign principal? Yes ☐ No ☒

If no, explain in full detail why there were no disbursements made on behalf of any foreign principal.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies, including monies transmitted, if any, to each foreign principal.

Date	To Whom	Purpose	Amount
------	---------	---------	--------

Total

(b) DISBURSEMENTS-THINGS OF VALUE

During this 6 month reporting period, have you disposed of anything of value¹⁰ other than money in furtherance of or in connection with activities on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement?

Yes ☐No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date	Recipient	Foreign Principal	Thing of Value	Purpose
------	-----------	-------------------	----------------	---------

(c) DISBURSEMENTS-POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

During this 6 month reporting period, have you from your own funds and on your own behalf either directly or through any other person, made any contributions of money or other things of value¹¹ in connection with an election to any political office, or in connection with any primary election, convention, or caucus held to select candidates for political office?

Yes ☒No ☐

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date	Amount or Thing of Value	Political Organization or Candidate	Location of Event
11/16/11	\$1000.00	Donald Payne for Congress	Washington DC

^{10, 11} Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks" and the like.

V - INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

16. (a) During this 6 month reporting period, did you prepare, disseminate or cause to be disseminated any informational materials?¹²
 Yes ☒ No ☐

If Yes, go to Item 17.

- (b) If you answered No to Item 16(a), do you disseminate any material in connection with your registration?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please forward the materials disseminated during the six month period to the Registration Unit for review.

17. Identify each such foreign principal.

Kingdom of Lesotho

18. During this 6 month reporting period, has any foreign principal established a budget or allocated a specified sum of money to finance your activities in preparing or disseminating informational materials? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, identify each such foreign principal, specify amount, and indicate for what period of time.

19. During this 6 month reporting period, did your activities in preparing, disseminating or causing the dissemination of informational materials include the use of any of the following:

- ☐ Radio or TV broadcasts ☐ Magazine or newspaper ☐ Motion picture films ☐ Letters or telegrams
☐ Advertising campaigns ☐ Press releases ☒ Pamphlets or other publications ☐ Lectures or speeches
☐ Other (specify) _____

Electronic Communications

- ☐ Email
☐ Website URL(s): _____
☐ Social media websites URL(s): _____
☐ Other (specify) _____

20. During this 6 month reporting period, did you disseminate or cause to be disseminated informational materials among any of the following groups:

- ☐ Public officials ☐ Newspapers ☐ Libraries
☐ Legislators ☐ Editors ☐ Educational institutions
☐ Government agencies ☒ Civic groups or associations ☐ Nationality groups
☒ Other (specify) US private sector and industry associations

21. What language was used in the informational materials:

☒ English ☐ Other (specify) _____

22. Did you file with the Registration Unit, U.S. Department of Justice a copy of each item of such informational materials disseminated or caused to be disseminated during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☒ No ☐

23. Did you label each item of such informational materials with the statement required by Section 4(b) of the Act?

Yes ☒ No ☐

12. The term informational materials includes any oral, visual, graphic, written, or pictorial information or matter of any kind, including that published by means of advertising, books, periodicals, newspapers, lectures, broadcasts, motion pictures, or any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or otherwise. Informational materials disseminated by an agent of a foreign principal as part of an activity in itself exempt from registration, or an activity which by itself would not require registration, need not be filed pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Act.

VI - EXECUTION

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1746, the undersigned swear(s) or affirm(s) under penalty of perjury that he/she has (they have) read the information set forth in this registration statement and the attached exhibits and that he/she is (they are) familiar with the contents thereof and that such contents are in their entirety true and accurate to the best of his/her (their) knowledge and belief, except that the undersigned make(s) no representation as to truth or accuracy of the information contained in the attached Short Form Registration Statement(s), if any, insofar as such information is not within his/her (their) personal knowledge.

(Date of signature)

(Print or type name under each signature or provide electronic signature ¹³)

30 mar 2012

 AUBREY HRUBY

13. This statement shall be signed by the individual agent, if the registrant is an individual, or by a majority of those partners, officers, directors or persons performing similar functions, if the registrant is an organization, except that the organization can, by power of attorney, authorize one or more individuals to execute this statement on its behalf.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/30/2012 6:09:40 PM

FARA Communications Log

[illegible]

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 03/30/2012 6:09:40 PM

FRONTIER LESOTHO

PROFESSOR ELIACHIM MOLAPI SEBATANE ASSUMES ROLE AS LESOTHO'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

On January 17th, 2012, His Excellency Professor Eliachim Molapi Sebatane presented his credentials to President Obama and became the 16th Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the US.

Ambassador Sebatane brings over 35 years of experience to this post — both as an academic and an administrator. Prior to his arrival in Washington, Ambassador Sebatane served as Professor of Education, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Acting Vice Chancellor at the National University of Lesotho. He holds a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh, and has been deeply involved in various education and policy-related bodies (both domestic and international), and is a former recipient of both the American Studies Research Fellowship and USAID sponsorship for graduate studies.

The Ambassador comes to his new position with specific priorities to enhance relations between Lesotho and the United States spanning trade, tourism, education, health, and political relations, as well as energy and mining. On the trade front, in particular, Ambassador Sebatane has participated actively alongside other African Ambassadors in engaging the US Congress to renew key provisions of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The Ambassador is also particularly keen on expanding tourism linkages between the US and his home country, and has made progress over the past several months in fostering interest among several tourism firms. Ambassador Sebatane is also actively engaging with the US mining industry, as Lesotho continues to develop its lucrative mining sector (heretofore dominated by regional mining interests).



Given his background, it is no surprise that Ambassador Sebatane will also prioritize greater cooperation between US and Lesotho universities. Lesotho has a long history of student exchanges with the US, although these flows have diminished considerably over the past decade, leaving a gap that is being filled by Asian institutions. Ambassador Sebatane would like to see this trend reversed, given the strong potential for educational and cultural exchanges to maintain and deepen US-Lesotho relations.

Regarding his new life in the US capital, the Ambassador greatly enjoys the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere. Although he misses the cultural affiliation he has with his home country (and the "neighborliness" of its communities in particular), he is nevertheless excited to take part in the diverse international scene in Washington and beyond. In the coming months, his work will take him to Los Angeles, Austin, Houston, and New Orleans. He is particularly excited about visiting the American South.

The Ambassador would like to see US companies more involved in Lesotho's potentially lucrative mining industry as it explores and updates geological data to unlock more resource opportunities.



the Whitaker group

Winter 2012

LESOTHO LAUNCHES GROUNDBREAKING NATIONAL CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION INITIATIVE

Lesotho's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare launched a groundbreaking national vaccination campaign in January to protect Basotho girls, aged nine to 13, from cervical cancer, a leading cause of female mortality in Lesotho. The initiative is the first-ever direct country-to-company procurement of a vaccine to combat the human papilloma virus (HPV), the most common cause of cervical cancer. It represents a pioneering effort in Africa to implement publicly-financed programs supported across a range of government departments in collaboration with a private sector partner.

The vaccination program is fully financed by the Government of Lesotho, which has mobilized \$2 million to buy 300,000 doses of GARDASIL at a discounted price negotiated by the government with bio-pharmaceutical research company Merck. Once the campaign is completed, 100,000 Basotho girls will be immunized.

Lesotho's mortality rate from cervical cancer is one of the highest in the world, with the World Health Organization (WHO) estimating that 179 Basotho women out of every 100,000 die from the disease each year. Not only are women in Lesotho much less

likely to be screened for HPV, they are also four times more likely to develop cancerous lesions from HPV if they are also infected with HIV. Twenty-three percent of adults in Lesotho are currently living with HIV, 56% of whom are women.

The program's launch ceremony, held at a school in Maseru, was attended by Prime Minister Dr. Pakalitha Mosisili, Dr. Mpho Ramatlape (Minister of Health and Social Welfare), Dr. Mampho Khaketla (Minister of Education), Timothy Thahane (Minister of Finance) and Parliamentary representatives from Lesotho's ten districts. Prime Minister Mosisili lauded the campaign as evidence of the government's strong commitment to reducing health expenditures by investing in preventive medicine with an emphasis on childhood immunization.

Cervical cancer represents a significant drain on Lesotho's health-care infrastructure as the country lacks the capacity to treat the disease and has to refer women to Bloemfontein, South Africa, for treatment. In 2011 alone these treatments cost the government over M20 million (US\$2.6 million).

In support of the program, the government plans to train health workers to educate the girls, their families and communities on the importance of being vaccinated against HPV. Dr. Khaketla noted the critical role that community mobilization will play in ensuring the program's success.

The first phase of the National Initiative to Protect Girls Against Cervical Cancer covers all of the country's ten districts. As each girl must be inoculated three times in order to be fully protected, additional phases will occur throughout 2012. Girls will receive the vaccination for free at their schools. Those not currently enrolled will be allowed to receive the immunization at the closest available school. In order to reach those girls who live in remote mountainous villages, the government will use a helicopter outfitted with a special refrigerator that keeps the vaccines cold while in transit.



GOVERNMENT TO MAKE NEW INVESTMENT IN APPAREL SECTOR

In an effort to stabilize employment in Lesotho, the government has announced plans to invest M100 million (US\$12.7 million) over the next two years to help the country's apparel sector ride out the global economic downturn and position itself to take advantage of the recovery in the US.

The apparel industry is Lesotho's largest employer, providing about 40,000 jobs in 2010. It contributes close to 20% of the country's

gross domestic product, earning US\$315.4 million in exports to the US in 2011, up 12.3% over earnings in 2010.

Referring to the slowdown in the global apparel market, Dr. Timothy Thahane, Minister of Finance and Development Planning, told IRIN news service, "There's not much we can do about the US markets. But we can make sure we are ready for the recovery."

This material is distributed by the Whitaker Group, INC on behalf of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington DC.

Winter 2012

FRONTIER *Lesotho*



OBAMA ADMINISTRATION BACKS ENHANCEMENTS TO AGOA

The Obama Administration has unveiled a new policy that calls for an extension of the landmark African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to 2025, renewal of the Third Country Multi-Fiber provision through 2022, and new tax incentives for U.S. companies that invest in African manufacturing capacity.

The new policy is the first indication that President Obama intends to follow Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in providing strong support for AGOA, which gives duty- and quota-free access to the U.S. for over 6,400 African products. It also represents a victory for Lesotho which has led African efforts in Washington to ensure that AGOA not only survives into the future but remains a vital tool of African development in a rapidly-changing global trade landscape.

Unless the U.S. Congress acts, the provision allowing African apparel manufacturers to use fabric sourced outside Africa for AGOA exports is set to expire at the end of 2012, while the full legislation is scheduled to end in 2015. AGOA's extension to 2025 will provide investors with the assurance they need

that African exports will continue to enjoy the benefits afforded by AGOA. In addition, allowing African garment factories to continue to use non-African-made fabric in their AGOA products will give the African textile industry much-needed time to expand capacity and become more competitive.

By including the elimination of U.S. taxes on repatriated revenues from American companies that invest in factories in AGOA-eligible countries, the Obama Administration is supporting a key new provision put forward by the AGOA Action Coalition, a coalition of U.S. and African stakeholders that has been central to AGOA's stewardship over the past 10 years.

"We congratulate President Obama on this new policy initiative," said Ms. Rosa Whitaker, CEO of The Whitaker Group (TWG) and chair of the AGOA Action Committee. "By preserving and strengthening AGOA, his Administration is ensuring that the U.S. remains a key strategic partner to Africa as its economies continue to expand apace. We are particularly gratified at the inclusion of tax incentives for U.S. companies with investments

in African factories. This puts American companies on a more equal footing with competitors from Asia which receive strong support from their governments when they invest in Africa."

After AGOA's passage in 2000, Lesotho was one of the first African countries to aggressively use the legislation as a tool of economic transformation, rapidly becoming Africa's top apparel exporter to the U.S. Before the expiration in 2004 of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement (MFA) that released a flood of Asian clothing exports on to global markets, Lesotho's apparel sector was earning close to \$500 million annually and employ-

ing 50,000 workers. Since then, the country has worked hard to develop a niche market as the manufacturer of choice for consumers seeking ethically-sourced apparel. The global economic downturn also adversely impacted Lesotho's garment sector, with exports under AGOA down to \$280.3 million in 2010. Trade figures, however, for 2011 indicate a 19% increase in earnings in the first quarter over the same period in 2010.



PHOTO: ALAFA

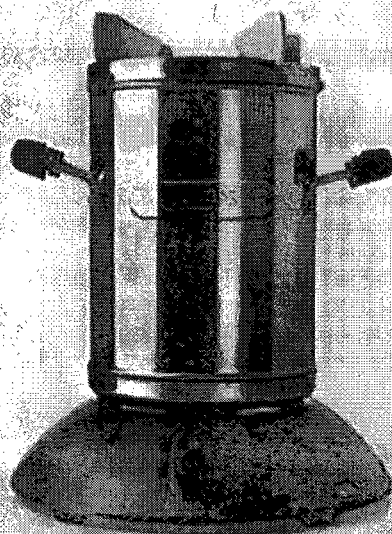
"AGOA has made progress in creating jobs, spurring economic growth and facilitating a dialogue on key economic and political challenges facing many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Importantly in this time of shrinking budgets, it has done all of these things at relatively low cost to the U.S. taxpayer," said Ambassador Johnnie Carson, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State. Other components of the new initiative include:

- Adding South Africa to the Third Country Multi-Fiber provision;
- Continuing the U.S. Agency for International Development's Trade Hub and capacity-building programs;
- Ensuring that the U.S. Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service maintains its presence in Dakar, Senegal, and Accra, Ghana; and
- Increasing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's capacity to provide phytosanitary certification to help increase African agricultural exports.

LESOTHO TO LEAD WAY IN CLEAN COOKSTOVE MANUFACTURING

Lesotho is set to further its status as a leader on climate change in Africa by becoming a regional supplier of clean cookstoves. Maseru-based African Clean Energy (Pty) Ltd., in collaboration with the global health and well-being company Philips, and the Government of Lesotho, plans to begin construction in late 2011 on a factory that will produce 300,000 Philips Smokeless Cooking Stoves annually for the African market.

In June, Lesotho and six other African nations joined the Global Alliance of Clean Cookstoves. Together the seven African partners have set a goal of reaching 20 million African homes with clean stoves and fuels by 2020.



An estimated three billion people in the developing world use traditional wood burning stoves for cooking and heating. The biomass fuel used in the process strains local resources, leads

to increased deforestation and contributes to climate change through the release of harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The inefficient combustion process also produces smoke that leads to chronic illness and respiratory problems. The Philips Smokeless Cooking Stove uses the principle of forced ventilation from above and below to reintroduce the smoke at the top half of the combustion chamber where it becomes an additional fuel source. The result is a more efficient fire that requires less fuel - an estimated 65% less wood, for example - and produces significantly less smoke.

Although there are concerns about the affordability of clean cook stoves for less affluent consumers, African Clean Energy's CEO Steve Walker estimates that the cost can be recouped in as little as four months from household savings on expensive fuel inputs such as charcoal, paraffin and liquid petroleum gas. The Philips stove operates efficiently on twigs, cow dung and other readily available bio-fuels. The use of these lesser biomass fuels can also reduce deforestation, a critical issue in Lesotho as well as in much of Africa. Although the stoves can run on charcoal, their ability to use twigs for fuel reduces demand for charcoal, the production of which releases significant amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere.

Use of the Philips stove is expected to have social benefits as well. The stove will save valuable time for consumers, as its limited wood consumption reduces time spent collecting fuel, a process that can take hours and usually involves women venturing far from home where their exposure to risk and violence

increases. Along with reducing smoke-induced respiratory illness, the Philips system also reduces the danger of potential burns associated with traditional stoves as the outer casing of the Philips model remains cool to the touch and lowers the potential for accidental fires.

African Clean Energy will manufacture two models of the Philips Smokeless Cooking Stove. One - Philips' latest version - will use a rechargeable battery to power a fan that forces the airflow process. For rural areas outside the electrical grid, the company will produce a natural draft model that contains no electrical components and, although slightly less smokeless, it is more affordable than the more advanced electrical model.

Once the factory is in production, it is expected to employ about 300 local workers.

NEW TRAINING CENTER FOR DIAMOND INDUSTRY OPENED

As part of its ongoing effort to expand local capacity and broaden the benefits of the country's burgeoning diamond industry, the Government of Lesotho opened a new center in February to train local workers to evaluate, classify, cut and polish rough diamonds.

In recent years, Lesotho's diamond industry has produced some of the largest yellow diamonds ever discovered, including the massive 603-carat Lesotho Promise. In 2009, the industry contributed almost 7% of GDP. But, although diamond mining employs an estimated 1,300 local workers, almost all of the skilled work has so far been performed outside the country.

With the opening of the Lesotho Diamonds Academy, the government hopes to recapture some of the value lost when the country's diamonds are processed elsewhere. All of the 50 students currently enrolled in the academy received scholarships from the government.

[The opening of the academy] will help boost economic and social growth through employment and circulation of diamonds, as well as improving the livelihood of the Basotho," said Mr. Michael Molefe, the academy's director.



The academy is part of a larger initiative by the government to broaden local participation in the diamond industry, including in fields such as gemology, jewelry design and diamond promotion.